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REPORT BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL CONCERNING THE SITUATION IN SOMALIA

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In its presidential statement of 25 August 1994 (S/PRST/1994/46), the Security Council took note of my report of 17 August 1994 (S/1994/977) and requested me to submit to it, well before 30 September 1994, a substantive report on prospects for national reconciliation in Somalia and on possible options for the future of the United Nations Operations in Somalia (UNOSOM II).

2. However, in the light of current developments in Somalia, the report called for by the Security Council will be submitted in two parts. The present part gives a factual account of recent developments in Somalia in the political, security and humanitarian fields. My assessment of progress concerning national reconciliation and my recommendations will be contained in the second part of the report, which I plan to submit by mid-October. The second part will draw upon the results of the visit to Somalia being currently undertaken by Mr. Kofi A. Annan, Under-Secretary-General for Peace-keeping Operations.

II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

3. In its presidential statement of 25 August, the Security Council expressed concern that the national reconciliation conference, which the 15 signatories to the Addis Ababa agreement (see S/26317) had agreed to convene on 15 May 1994 in their Nairobi Declaration of 24 March 1994 (see S/1994/614, annex I) had not taken place. The Council commended the efforts of my Special Representative to reinvigorate the process of national reconciliation, including through the encouragement of local and regional initiatives and conferences. It also stated that it attached great importance to accelerated inter-clan reconciliation, in particular among the Hawiye subclans, with the involvement of all concerned. In this connection, the Council will recall that, in my previous report (S/1994/977), I expressed agreement with the assessment of my Special Representative that conflicts within the Hawiye clan constituted the major obstacle to national reconciliation and that the successful conclusion of a Hawiye peace conference would greatly facilitate the national reconciliation process.

4. Since my last report, my Special Representative has been engaged in intensive consultations with Mr. Ali Mahdi, General Aidid and the Imam of Hirab, Imam Mahamoud Imam Omar, concerning arrangements for convening the Hawiye peace conference and the national reconciliation conference. During their discussions, the Imam of Hirab confirmed to my Special Representative the willingness of both Mr. Ali Mahdi and General Aidid to participate in the conferences. In separate discussions with my Special Representative, both General Aidid and Mr. Ali Mahdi assured him of their support for the initiative of the Imam to resolve differences among the Hawiye subclans (Abgal, Habr Gedir, Hawadle and Murusade) as a prelude to the national reconciliation conference.

5. The Imam of Hirab advised my Special Representative that it would be necessary to arrange separate meetings between the Habr Gedir and the other subclans before proceeding to a plenary session of the Hawiye peace conference. He was confident that this process would succeed and result in the establishment of district and regional councils in Benadir (Mogadishu) as well as the appointment of a governor for Benadir.

6. Over the past few weeks, the Imam has held meetings with various subclan leaders. His efforts culminated in the convening on 20 August 1994 of a meeting attended by 36 representatives from the Mudulood clan family (including Abgals) and the Habr Gedir. The participants unanimously agreed that, in order to facilitate the restoration of peace in Mogadishu, their respective "technicals" must withdraw to their original areas of control. A committee was accordingly established to monitor and oversee the removal of the "technicals".

7. Subsequently, a political subcommittee of the Hirab Reconciliation Committee, set up by the Imam in January 1994, was reconvened from 28 to 30 August 1994 at a hotel in north Mogadishu. During the meeting, the Hirab subclans (Abgal and Habr Gedir) agreed that all militia men should be withdrawn from contested areas with immediate effect. Agreement was also reached that all checkpoints and roadblocks set up by the various clan militias in the city should be removed by 3 September 1994. Furthermore, a joint committee was established to resolve the issue of the roadblocks and the positioning of militia at the entrance to Mogadishu seaport and airport.

8. On 3 September 1994, the Imam of Hirab also led a 13-man peace mission of the Mudulood clan family to Medina district, where he secured the agreement of feuding clans in the district to disarm their militias and to appoint a committee of elders to settle their disputes in accordance with Somali tradition.

9. Similar agreements have been reached by the Habr Gedir and Murusade in Mogadishu with a view to achieving a comprehensive peace agreement between the two subclans. A follow-up mechanism for the implementation of agreements reached, including a cease-fire monitoring committee and a committee of elders, has been established.

10. On the whole, the initiatives of the Imam and other concerned Hawiye clan leaders appear to have had a salutary effect on the security situation in Mogadishu, although continued sightings of "technicals" remain a cause for concern.

11. Members of the Council will recall that the Somali factions had indefinitely postponed the preparatory meeting for the national reconciliation conference, called for under the Nairobi Declaration. The postponement was intended to allow sufficient time for consultations on the participation of the Somali National Movement (SNM) in the national reconciliation process; for the convening of the Congress of the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF), which was to elect a new leadership of the faction; and for the conclusion of the Lower Juba Reconciliation Conference.

12. The Lower Juba Reconciliation Conference was successfully concluded on 18 June 1994. There have been no major violations of the Lower Juba peace agreement and the cease-fire is holding. The implementation committee has been meeting in Kismayo with a view to formulating a plan of action for the implementation of the agreement. The leaders of the Lower Juba Reconciliation Conference and the Absame Reconciliation Conference have continued to meet in an effort to merge the two peace processes in order to consolidate peace in both the Lower and the Middle Juba regions. The Chairman of the Lower Juba Reconciliation Conference, General Mohamed Ibrahim Ahmed "Liqliqato", held successful meetings from 7 to 9 September 1994 with Imam Sayed Hussein, Chairman of the Absame Reconciliation Conference, and General Mohamed Said Hersi "Morgan". Agreement was reached at these meetings to set priorities for the Juba regions and to expedite the implementation of the Lower Juba and Absame peace agreements.

13. The Fifth Congress of SSDF, following two months of intensive consultations, elected Colonel Abdullahi Yusuf as its new Chairman on 22 August 1994. The election of Colonel Abdullahi Yusuf has been accepted and Mr. Abdirazak Haji Hussein, the nominee of the supreme committee of the Sultans of the north-east to the chairmanship of SSDF, has recognized the election of Abdullahi Yusuf. The Congress was concluded on 26 August 1994 and consultations are continuing to consolidate its outcome. Following his election as SSDF Chairman, Colonel Yusuf has affirmed his commitment to assist in bringing together the southern factions in Mogadishu in order to facilitate national reconciliation, on the basis of the Addis Ababa agreement and the Nairobi Declaration.

14. With respect to developments concerning the participation of SNM in the national reconciliation process as called for under the Nairobi Declaration, the SNM Chairman, Mr. Abdirahman Ahmed Ali, met with the chairmen of the other three north-west-based political factions (Somali Democratic Alliance (SDA), United Somali Party (USP) and United Somali Front (USF)) in Djibouti, from 13 to 17 August 1994, to consider the situation in the north-west. At the end of their meeting, they issued a joint statement declaring, inter alia, that secession of the north was neither feasible nor desirable and that the national reconciliation conference envisaged under the Nairobi Declaration was long overdue and should be convened not later than September 1994. The statement also proposed the adoption of a federal system of government for Somalia and conveyed an offer by the four factions to use their good offices to mediate between the factions in the south.

15. A joint delegation of three of the north-west-based factions (SNM, USF and SDA) arrived in Mogadishu on 30 August 1994 to mediate between the factions of

the south. The joint delegation informed my Special Representative that the purpose of their mission was to promote and facilitate national reconciliation. The north-west-based factions believed that they had a responsibility at that stage to play a special role in breaking the impasse among the factions of the south in order to advance national reconciliation. They outlined their plan, which included, first, securing the broad agreement of the southern factions to the concept of a federal system of government for the whole of Somalia. That would be followed by further efforts to find a basis for reconciling SNA and the Group of 12 in order to expedite the national reconciliation process and the formation of an interim Government. The joint delegation was confident that, through its mediation, the preparatory meeting for the national reconciliation conference would be convened by the end of September 1994, and that all signatories to the Addis Ababa agreement would participate in the meeting.

16. Since its arrival, the joint delegation of SNM, USF and SDA has also held consultations with General Aidid, and the Somali National Alliance (SNA), Mr. Mohamed Qanyare Afrah, Chairman of the United Somali Congress (USC), and Mr. Ali Mahdi. The north-west-based factions also intend to meet with the Imam of Hirab to discuss national reconciliation after their consultations with Mr. Ali Mahdi and General Aidid.

III. MILITARY AND SECURITY ASPECTS

17. In its presidential statement of 25 August 1994, the Council expressed its belief that the Secretary-General's recommendations for a reduction of the UNOSOM II Force contained in his report of 17 August 1994 (S/1994/977) were appropriate in the circumstances prevailing in Somalia. The Council stressed that priority should be given to ensuring the safety and security of UNOSOM II and other international personnel, including that of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and underlined the responsibility of the Somali parties in that connection.

18. Accordingly, the Force Commander took immediate steps to reduce the Force level by 1,500 by the end of September 1994 and thereafter to bring it down to 15,000 all ranks by the end of October. These reductions will bring the Force to a level 31 per cent below the strength of 22,000 authorized by Security Council resolution 897 (1994).

19. It is planned to carry out the reduction process in two phases. Phase I is being achieved by repatriating four units: one Pakistani infantry battalion of 879 all ranks and the Romanian field hospital of 234 all ranks, both located in Mogadishu; the Botswanan contingent of 423 all ranks, located in Bardera; and the Irish transport unit of 90 all ranks, located in Baidoa.

20. Phase II of the reduction, in October 1994, will be achieved by repatriating two additional infantry units from Nepal located in Mogadishu and one Nigerian infantry unit in Merka and reducing by 4.5 per cent all other national contingents and the Force headquarters.

21. The reduction plan has been adopted to make maximum use of forthcoming scheduled rotations and to repatriate soldiers who have completed their tour of

duty. Furthermore, the plan retains the multinational structure of UNOSOM II and allows contingent commanders the flexibility of deciding which personnel will be repatriated from their contingents in order to maintain the operational capabilities of the Force. The plan involves withdrawing forces from those areas where the situation is relatively stable at present. The maximum possible time is thereby provided for humanitarian activities to continue under the protection of UNOSOM forces where protection is most needed.

22. Although the Force would continue to perform the main tasks assigned to it under its current mandate, security considerations have already begun to affect the performance of UNOSOM. The Force Commander has therefore decided to concentrate the troops. The purpose of the concentration, by deploying contingents strong enough to react successfully to an attack, is to avoid the repetition of the kind of incident that occurred in Belet Weyne on 29 July when a small UNOSOM contingent was overrun by a strong militia force. As a result of the concentration of forces and the reduction process, troops have already been withdrawn from several locations: Bardera, Hoddur, Wajid, Balad. Before the end of October, troops will have been withdrawn from several other locations. On account of the withdrawal of forces from the above areas, gaps will be created in the deployment of the Force, which could be exploited by hostile forces, thereby increasing the security task. Therefore, the Force, while continuing to protect major seaports and airports and escorting humanitarian convoys, will no longer be in a position to provide permanent protection to United Nations agencies and NGOs at the locations that have been vacated. UNOSOM will however have the capability to react promptly to any anticipated emergency and to carry out humanitarian projects within a radius of 150 kms. By the end of October 1994, UNOSOM II will be concentrated mainly in three locations: Mogadishu area, Baidoa and Kismayo.

23. UNOSOM II continues to support the re-establishment of a Somali police force by providing instruction in basic training to Somali police instructors. However, the Force has been directed to discontinue further issue of police equipment provided by the United States of America and move such equipment to safer locations. Relocation has been completed. The withdrawal of civilian police personnel, already decided by some troop-contributing States, is another factor that increasingly slows down the police programme.

24. In spite of the agreements among Somali factions mentioned above regarding the removal of "technicals" and of checkpoints or roadblocks, such "technicals" are being observed in Mogadishu on a daily basis, particularly around the seaport and the airport. The "technicals" are mounted with machine-guns and recoilless weapons and manned by armed militia. Sporadic small-arms fire can be heard on a continuous basis in Mogadishu.

25. Outside Mogadishu, the threat posed by "technicals" and armed militia is permanent. A total of 17 "technicals" carrying machine-guns and manned by armed militia have been observed recently near Afgooye. Inter-clan fighting has erupted in the vicinity of Baledogle, between Mogadishu and Baidoa. On 7 September a UNOSOM logistics convoy of 18 trucks was ambushed near Wanlaweyn. Only one vehicle reached Baledogle.

26. The most serious of the recent incidents happened in Belet Weyne and in the Indian area of responsibility. On 29 July, in Belet Weyne, troops of the Zimbabwean contingent were completely overrun by a strong militia force. One UNOSOM soldier was killed and the UNOSOM troops had to abandon all their equipment to the militia. The Indian contingent had to face two serious incidents during the same week. On 22 August, an Indian unit escorting a supply convoy was ambushed by armed militia near Burlego, on the Baledogle-Baidoa road. Seven Indian soldiers were killed during this incident. On 31 August, three Indian doctors were killed in Baidoa when a rifle grenade exploded as they were leaving the officers' mess.

27. The most recent significant incident happened in Balad on 9 September. During a ceremony to hand over some United Nations equipment to the local authorities, the latter demanded that all United Nations equipment be handed over to them. In the afternoon of the same day, approximately 100 militia, supported by "technicals", attacked a UNOSOM position protected by troops of the Zimbabwean contingent, with a view to seizing all the equipment before the troops withdrew. UNOSOM troops reacted immediately in self-defence. Four militia members were killed and 39 captured during this incident. No casualties were incurred by the UNOSOM troops. The Zimbabwean contingent finally left Balad with all equipment and stores intact. Immediately upon their departure, some 300 men, women and children rushed into the camp to pick up leftovers. These serious incidents again illustrate the very volatile and virtually uncontrollable situation in Somalia. Similar incidents can happen anywhere, at any time.

IV. THE HUMANITARIAN MISSION

28. United Nations agencies and NGOs have continued to provide humanitarian relief to the most vulnerable segments of the population and rehabilitation assistance wherever conditions of access and security allowed these interventions.

29. The humanitarian situation in Somalia over the past few months has been characterized by relative stability of the major indicators of the health and nutritional status of the majority of the population. Despite sporadic problems, particularly in the Middle Shabelle, Lower Juba and Bay regions, the country as a whole is expecting a good harvest during this rainy season. Under normal conditions of internal stability, security and governance, international assistance should now be shifted to a post-emergency recovery and development phase. Unfortunately, this is not possible in most regions owing to continued banditry, fighting and unrealistic demands for the provision of security or the settlement of petty disputes.

30. In this context, several organizations have either withdrawn their international staff from certain locations or have simply ceased operation. In parallel, the services of coordination, information, logistic support and security that could be provided by UNOSOM have been reduced considerably through a combination of troop reductions, Somali political or military actions and budgetary restrictions. Indeed, following the departure or suspension of activities of UNOSOM in Bossasso, Belet Weyne, Hargeisa, Hoddur, Balad, Wajid

and Bardera in recent weeks and the planned closure of Merka by the end of October, the geographical area where UNOSOM can effectively support humanitarian operations is now reduced to some 50 per cent of what it was in mid-1994.

31. Operations of the United Nations organizations have also decreased, but mainly in the southern part of the country where prevailing security conditions or the impending troop withdrawals have resulted in a temporary suspension of activities in certain locations.

32. The World Food Programme (WFP) is currently active in six regions: Baidoa, Wajid, Hoddur, Galkayo, Bossasso and Hargeisa. Luug was closed because of insecurity. Baidoa remains the logistical hub of the south and requires a strong UNOSOM military presence. Recent problems encountered by WFP in the delivery of commodities through Mogadishu seaport eased during the month of August. WFP, however, estimates that its humanitarian operations in south-central Somalia would be at greater risk without the UNOSOM military presence. However, in northern Somalia, operations continue without the presence of UNOSOM troops.

33. Rain-fed and irrigated areas were surveyed and examined by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Gedo, Lower Shabelle, Hiran, Juba Valley, Middle Shabelle, Bay and Bakool to determine crop performance. A plant protection campaign and crop demonstration programmes are being implemented. Somalia is one of the nations identified for inclusion in a land-cover mapping project that covers the East African nations and will address development planning, sustainable management, food security, early warning systems and environmental monitoring.

34. The World Health Organization (WHO) continues its operations in Mogadishu, Baidoa, Kismayo, Hargeisa and Bossasso. In its communicable diseases control programme, WHO continues to provide technical support and supplies to local authorities and NGOs involved in the control of endemic diseases. Its basic minimum needs and primary health-care programme and training and manpower development programme continue operations and will remain to do so, security conditions permitting.

35. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was planning to support a number of small-scale activities in the Lower and Middle Shabelle regions and Baidoa, but the absence of UNOSOM's security support in these areas could affect considerations to do so.

36. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) programmes in Somalia have continued to provide vital assistance to children, women and other vulnerable groups, particularly in the areas of health, nutrition, water and sanitation and basic education, in all major areas of the country. UNICEF has received important support from UNOSOM, particularly logistics and security. UNOSOM's provision of security at airports and seaports, and protection of convoys in central and southern Somalia, were and remain essential to UNICEF's programme.

37. UNESCO conducted several workshops and refresher courses for headmasters and teachers during the annual closure of schools in August in Somalia. A mine-awareness campaign in Somali refugee camps in Kenya will be completed in

the coming weeks, covering 30,000 refugees. The production of textbooks and teacher guides in Somali progressed according to predetermined schedules. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)-Somalia now comes under the UNESCO programme of emergency education and rehabilitation (PEER) and, as such, contributes to activities outside Somalia.

38. The International Organization for Migration (IOM), under an agreement with the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs, has now assigned a team to reinforce the efforts of UNOSOM's Division for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in assisting internally displaced persons in their return home. Despite numerous difficulties and lack of resources, return convoys continue to be organized regularly with essential support from UNOSOM troops.

39. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has resettlement operations in Kismayo, Bardera, Middle Juba and Hargeisa. Thirty thousand displaced people from Kenya are currently awaiting resettlement to Kismayo as soon as the security situation allows.

V. CONCLUDING REMARKS

40. Subject to the cooperation of all concerned, the present efforts of the Somali parties, with the assistance of UNOSOM II, could lead to the convening of a Hawiye peace conference and the preparatory meeting for the National Reconciliation Conference by the end of September 1994. My Special Representative will continue his efforts towards that end. However, we should not overlook the daunting difficulties that have, time and again, delayed and frustrated past efforts to implement the Addis Ababa and Nairobi agreements.

41. In my report of 17 August (S/1994/977), I indicated that the end of September would be a crucial period for both the national reconciliation process and the continued involvement of the United Nations in Somalia. In view of the current developments, as well as the assessment of the situation on the ground that is being undertaken by the Secretariat, I expect to be in a position by mid-October to submit to the Security Council, in the second part of my report, my assessment of the prospects of national reconciliation and recommendations for the future of the United Nations operation in Somalia. The Council may therefore wish to consider extending the mandate of UNOSOM II for a period of one month.